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ABSTRACT

Physical education teachers needed to reach a consensus among themselves as to the direction and scope of elementary school physical education, and they needed to work with other groups to produce a document that could be used as a resource to educate others about the importance of elementary school physical education. "Essentials of a Quality Elementary School Physical Education Program" (1970) and "A Statement of Basic Beliefs" (1976) are two booklets which report on the needs of elementary school physical education programs. In 1979, the executive committee of the Council of Physical Education for Children undertook the task of rewriting the essentials, for the purpose of adding strength and conviction to some of the beliefs. The book's topics now include: (1) the child--the person most affected by the profession's beliefs about physical education; (2) learning experiences which permit the child to function as a unique individual within the class; (3) the teacher--the most important factor in a successful physical education program; (4) teacher preparation and staff development; (5) comprehensive physical education programs; and (6) evaluation of teachers and instructional programs. (CJ)

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ESSENTIALS OF A QUALITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

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Toledo Public Schools

Presentation at AAHPERD National Convention and Exhibition - Minneapolis, Minnesota, April 10, 1983, 10:45 a.m.

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At a session entitled "Leadership is Everybody's Business" at the AAHPERD Convention in Houston 1982 the audience selected "Public relations and/or communications" as being the most urgent and pressing concern for COPEC to address.

The audience also felt that the profession needed to get a consensus within the field as to the direction and scope of elementary school physical education and to work with other groups to produce a document that could be used as a resource to educate others as to the importance of physical education at the elementary school level.

COPEC and the Council of City and County Directors scheduled a joint session for this convention and selected to bring forward the position paper, "Essentials of a Quality Elementary School Physical Education Program" to see if it reflects the belief of the profession.

This original document was published in 1970 by the elementary school physical education commission of AAHPER's Physical Education Division. This document was reviewed at three National meetings sponsored by AAHPER:

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1. National Conference for Teachers and Supervisors of Elementary School Physical Education
2. National Conference of City and County Directors of HPER
3. Physical Education Division Workshop at the 1969 AAHPER Convention in Boston

In 1976, the Society of State Directors of Health, Physical Education and Recreation published the booklet, "A Statement of Basic Beliefs". This booklet gave support to the 1970 elementary school physical education position paper in stating:

1. That daily physical education is necessary, and that it should be exclusive of time allotted for dressing, showering, recess, free/supervised play periods, and noon hour activities.
2. That instruction should be individualized and that we need to look at the uniqueness of each child in planning programs.
3. That each child should attain a wide variety of skills.
4. That physical education should be adapted for those pupils who have special needs.
5. That evaluation is the means of interpreting the program to students and adults in order to improve community understanding of the values and outcomes of physical education.

This booklet not only complemented the original beliefs it provided a means of communication as it was distributed across the country. In 1979 the executive committee of the Council of Physical Education for Children undertook the task of rewriting the essentials. The executive committee was made up of two elementary physical education specialists, one with a special interest in adapted, one state director of physical education who was a former supervisor

and teacher of physical education and two college personnel in teacher preparation both having continued teaching experience with children.

The committee agreed that the 1970 document, though still acceptable, would be written with the purpose of adding strength and conviction to some of the beliefs. The Council would become more definitive and begin to take a stand for what they believed a quality elementary school physical education program should be.

They sought a great deal of input and evaluation from across the country. State directors, teachers, supervisors and administrators were asked for a critical assessment. As a group they discussed, argued and reached consensus in putting this document together. They feel it should be used to determine direction and focus in developing new programs, in assessing current programs, in educating school administrations and school communities to the essentials of a quality elementary school physical education program.

This morning Sally and I would like to address five of the eight topics that are discussed in this booklet. Not dwelling on what can be read and interpreted, but on the topics we personally feel need to be highlighted. Sally speaking from her involvement in rewriting this document and myself from the Council of City and County Directors in selecting, assessing, and evaluating quality physical education programs.

First and foremost - Who is the most important person that is affected by our profession by our beliefs about physical education?

The child

We are teachers of children first - we need to understand children so we can

help them learn. We need to accept that children are individuals and our programs must be designed so that all of the children have the right to experience success and to gain confidence in their own ability. Many of us say we believe this, but how many of you organize your programs to show that it exists?

In a 1975 publication from the state of Ohio on elementary physical education it states:

> That the elementary school physical education curriculum should provide learning experiences which permit the child to function as a unique individual within the framework of the class situation.

In a 1982 publication from the state of Wyoming, "Standards of Excellence For Elementary Physical Education" it states, "I am a unique individual." "My friends and I have different abilities for learning motor skills. The time and way that I learn changes from day to day and from kid to kid." Many states have similar statements regarding the need to individualize instruction.

You can individualize instruction and you should if you believe that each child is unique.

The teacher

To me the most important factor in a successful physical education program is the teacher. They must love children and care about their wellbeing. They must love movement and be able to relate its importance to adults and to children. They must be so competent in their understanding of the growth and development of children, motor development and motor performance, that they can stimulate children in a vast variety of movement experiences.

Physical education is the study of movement and it is the "teacher" that makes or breaks a program. If you want your children to learn how to read you hire a competent reading specialist - not when they get to high school, but in the elementary grades. If you want your children to become versatile, knowledgeable and effective movers, then you hire a competent movement specialist in the elementary grades when most of the motor development patterns are formulating.

Teachers must also be involved in the total school. Actively working with classroom teachers to attain a better understanding of the children. Teachers must educate the administration and the community and show that physical education is educationally sound and has an important function in the school.

A good teacher can make a program and a program can also break a good teacher. A teacher needs to educate but also needs the support of peers, administration, community, and the profession.

Teacher Preparation and the Staff Development

The teacher must come into our schools well prepared and certified to teach young children. One only has to look at their individual state standards for certification to teach elementary school physical education to know that something is sorely amiss.

Requirements for state certification differ greatly from one state to the next. And often, greatly differ within a state because of the ambiguity within the name of a course. How many states have K-12 certification to teach physical education with only one course related to children in grades K-6? Frequently that <u>one</u> course is labeled, "Kiddie Games." Many states do not

require student teaching at both levels. Florida, Ohio and other states have tried to design and implement a K-6 certification which would help in focusing the teaching/learning program requirements on educating young children, Special emphasis would be made on observing children, observing movement, and on teaching.

Manny Harageones from the Florida Department of Education and the current Chair of the Executive Committee of the Council on Physical Education for Children will present to you the process by which the State of Florida is implementing a K-6 certification for teaching elementary school physical education.

(presentation not available)

As a profession we need specialists to teach children physical education. States must organize - and educate the public and make recommendations for the change. We must then fight through local and state associations to change state standards.

A possible plan of action might be:

Organize a state task force

Made up of:	college personnel state department personnel teaching personnel administration personnel community leaders
to:	assess present standards identify needs recommend change
Bring about change by:	increase support base by numbers public awareness State Board of Education presentation lobby for change

Others who teach physical education in our schools are classroom teachers. In many instances an elementary education major may be certified to teach physical education by adding one or two courses to their program. Sometimes they do a better job than a physical education teacher because they want to

teach young children and have had many courses required in the study of children and how children learn.

We can improve the quality and quantity of their background by providing minor courses of study in our colleges and universities. This should also be closely looked at as we examine state standards.

We also have an obligation to teachers already in the schools.

Directors, supervisors and teachers of elementary school children need to be current, need to be actively involved in teaching children. Teachers must be encouraged to stay current, to study, to implement new curriculum. Inservice educational opportunities must be made available between the colleges and the schools to help the teachers as well as to help college personnel know what is happening in the schools.

State Directors, City and County Directors, State Professional Associations and Colleges and Universities have an obligation to improve the quality of elementary school physical education programs. Perhaps if states could identify schools or school systems that exemplify model or quality programs, they could be used in providing visual direction and could also be an excellent center of inservice education.

Instructional Program

A comprehensive physical education program for all children has as its foundation learning experiences which are designed to help each child develop efficient, effective, and expressive movement patterns in a variety of movement situations. Such experiences should serve the divergent needs of all

pupils--the gifted, the slow learner, the handicapped, the culturally deprived, and the average. All programs should allow for the developmental needs of each child.

There is a very strong push across the country for physical fitness. I agree that we have an obligation as a profession to make sure that every instructional program has as an outcome a high level of physical fitness for each child. However, I strongly disagree with the methods that are used to teach physical fitness.

Physical Education teachers should know movement activities so well that they do not have to do rote teaching to teach physical fitness. They do not have to have children do exercises, stunts and drills as a means of improving muscular strength, endurances, flexibility, agility, balance and coordination, cardio-vascular/respiratory functions to teach physical fitness. Teachers of physical education should know that all of these factors surface in carefully planned and purposeful movement experiences in sport, dance and gymnastics activities.

How many programs still have units of study in:

Hoop activities
Bean bag activities
Parachute activities
Adapted
Small group games
Manipulative skills
Physical fitness
Movement
Rhythms

Would units of study on skills with developmental progression through the six year program better help the children gain a comprehensive background in physical education? Where skills are interrelated in a wide variety of activities not

just limited to a particular setting or unit.

For an idea on how this could be developed, you might want to examine The Journal, September 1982, "A K-6 Progression Built on Organizing Concepts" where a teacher, Lori Stefoff outlined a progression on the skill of striking and designed units of study for grades K-6.

Evaluation

An Assessment Guide that will accompany the position paper is being developed. The rough draft has been submitted and completion date is summer of 1983. Evaluation must be continuous and must be done to insure accountability in the school curriculum.

JoAnne Owens-Nousler from the Nebraska State Department of Education will present to you the process by which the State Department of Education in Nebraska evaluates their elementary school physical education programs.

(presentation not available)

In Education Week, October 27, 1982, an article, "Teachers Evaluate Teachers in Unusual Project in Toledo" Thomas Toch described the Internship Program in Toledo Public Schools. The Physical Education Department is included in this program at this time. Master teachers advise and supervise new teachers through regular classroom visits and follow-up meetings. The master teachers will evaluate at the end of the year and will largely decide whether the new teachers are rehired. The master teachers also spend part of their time working with tenured teachers in the school system who are performing poorly. In the past many principals and supervisors didn't have time or make the

effort, or didn't have the subject matter knowledge, to build the kind or case needed to dismiss an incompetent teacher.

The Toledo experiment, now in its second year, is part of a small but growing movement to get better teachers into the classroom by giving recent college graduates more support and guidence during their first year of teaching and by weeding out those who prove incompetent before they get tenure.

Georgia two years ago initiated an internship system that puts each new teacher under the supervision of a three-member team made up of a school faculty member, a school-system administrator, and an experienced teacher. Florida and Oklahoma started similar programs for beginning teachers last fall

When we are finished this morning I'm sure some of you will leave with the feeling that I have had so frequently - I could have read all that was said in the handout or nothing that I haven't heard before - but what I hope you will also leave with is a more visible picture of what could or should exist in all our elementary schools in the name of physical education.

Save your jobs! Save your programs! "You" have to prove their worth. "You" have to show that physical education has educational value and is a vital part of the elementary school curriculum. "You" have to believe it and do something about it. Following today's program you can go home and examine the parts: What do you have? What do you want? Take pictures, make a presentation to your school board, to your community - let them see, let them know. Let them know what other communities have for the same number of dollars.

Copies of the Essentials are available at the AAHPERD Publication booth in the Exhibits Area.